

Paul Sarbanes spent 30 years in this Chamber doing what he knew was right. In that time, he built a legacy most could not achieve in two lifetimes.

Paul's work on banking, the economy, housing, transportation, and so many other issues had a profound and significant impact on our country. But, more importantly, his work had a direct impact on so many families whose lives were made better because of his unsung efforts over three decades.

I had the distinct honor of serving with Senator Sarbanes and working directly with him on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee and the Joint Economic Committee.

Senator Sarbanes was a constant and steady champion of commonsense fiscal policies to help create jobs, expand our economy, and increase consumer and investor protections. Indeed, he used his power and influence to help those with the least power and influence in our society, which is a hallmark of our finest public servants. And Paul still remains one of our finest public servants—indeed, one of the finest of the finest.

Many would agree that the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 stands among his best work. Responding to a number of major corporate accounting scandals, Senator Sarbanes' legislation began the process of trying to restore investor confidence in corporate America and our securities markets. Eighteen years later, this law continues to be a critical pillar of our financial system.

During his tenure as chair of the Joint Economic Committee in the late eighties and early nineties, Paul framed many of the important economic issues and debates that the country was experiencing at the time. He held timely hearings on income inequality, trade deficit, and unemployment during a time at which the country was only beginning to come to grips with the notion that there needed to be a different direction in our economy.

Unfortunately, our Nation is now battling a pandemic that is furthering economic inequalities, and both the Senate and the country could use and greatly misses Senator Sarbanes' thoughtfulness, incisiveness, and compassion during these difficult times.

Senator Sarbanes was also one of our Nation's greatest champions for affordable housing. He fought his entire career for our Nation's working families, trying to make it possible for more families in our country to have decent, safe, and affordable housing.

Most notably, Paul was one of the original authors of the Home Investment Partnerships Program, known as the HOME Program. This program has provided critical funding to our Nation's States and localities, helping them maintain or expand their supply of affordable housing for many Americans.

Paul also fought aggressively for funding of the section 8 voucher pro-

gram and was one of the chief supporters of improvements to our Nation's public housing programs during his Senate tenure.

Senator Sarbanes also recognized the essential role that public transportation plays in bringing communities together, fostering economic development, and promoting a cleaner environment. As ranking member of the Banking Committee, he led the effort to reauthorize the Nation's transit programs and the fight to ensure that transit received its fair share of funding.

Time after time, Paul Sarbanes did the right things for the right reasons. He could not care less whether he got the credit, the press, or the fanfare. His primary motivation was simply knowing that he made a meaningful difference in the lives of his constituents and the American people, and, in this regard, there are few who are as accomplished as Paul Sarbanes.

His keen intellect, his extensive knowledge of the issues, and his concern for Americans across this great country all contributed to his impressive body of legislative accomplishments.

Now, I had the occasion to speak with JOHN SARBANES, Congressman from Maryland, who is carrying on the proud tradition of the Sarbanes family, and he said his dad was best described as a workhorse, not a show horse, and that is right. Paul Sarbanes did the work of the people. He did not try to garner the praise and the acclaim; he just wanted to make sure the work was done and done well. And he did throughout his entire career.

My best wishes go to Paul's family, including his sons Michael Sarbanes and Representative JOHN SARBANES; his daughter Janet Sarbanes; and his grandchildren. They have lost a father and a grandfather. The country has lost one of its greatest champions. And I have lost a dear and precious friend.

May he rest in peace.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator VAN HOLLEN and myself, I want to thank our colleagues for their tribute to Senator Paul Sarbanes—Senator STABENOW and Senator REED. I know that Senator SCHUMER and Senator DURBIN have spoken on the floor. Many of us have and many have expressed their condolences through our office to the family. We just want to express our appreciation.

As Senator VAN HOLLEN said, I had the honor—or the challenge—to follow Senator Sarbanes in this body. I have his seat in the Senate. When I was sworn in almost 14 years ago, Senator Sarbanes escorted me to take the oath of office. As I mentioned earlier, he is an inspiration to all of us.

I want to thank our colleagues for the tribute they have paid to an outstanding Marylander, an outstanding American, and he will be missed by all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk again about the need for Congress to act to pass a COVID-19 bill that helps the people we represent. I am told this is the 20th time I have come to the floor to make this plea, meaning that I haven't been all that convincing, I guess.

But the reality is there is hope in the air. There is a bipartisan group that is working on a package. I am part of that group, as is the Presiding Officer. It is bipartisan: about five Democrats, about five Republicans.

Maybe more significantly, today the White House apparently made an offer to Speaker PELOSI to reengage in conversation to try to get to a package that meets the needs of everyone. The package that was presented was actually very similar to the package that this bipartisan group has been working on over the past few weeks. So there is hope in the air, and that is good because we need the help, and we need it now.

Let's talk for a minute about why we need this help. I would guess that pretty much everybody in this Chamber has seen firsthand the health crisis that we are facing. The number of cases is up. The number of people in intensive care is up. Hospitalizations are up. And, sadly, fatalities have increased.

Some of my colleagues in this Chamber have had to fight cases of COVID-19 themselves. Thank God they are all OK. But that is not true with everyone we represent. I would bet that everyone in this Chamber knows somebody and probably multiple people who have had a very tough time or who have even succumbed to this terrible disease.

Last week, another friend of mine died because of COVID-19. His name was Mike Crabtree. Mike was a county commissioner in Scioto County, OH—a friend, a standup guy who helped me on a lot of tough issues in Southeast Ohio. He was always there for his community and for me. Today, of course, we offer our prayers to his wife Diane, his family, and to all of his friends in Scioto County.

It is personal. In the face of these personal tragedies and the sad reality that in many States we are now experiencing this higher number of cases—in many States it is the highest we have had since the beginning of this pandemic—we do have some promising news on one front, and that is on the vaccine front.

It now seems clear that later this month, and then over the next 3 to 4 months, help is on the way in the form of very effective new vaccines being developed by Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, and other U.S. manufacturers.

The unprecedented support that Congress has provided for vaccine development, the Trump administration's innovative approach to cut bureaucratic redtape through what is called Operation Warp Speed, and the commitment and ingenuity of our researchers who have been working around the clock, our scientists, and our manufacturers have combined to put us on a path to having multiple vaccines, at unprecedented speed, with efficacy rates above 90 percent.

This is incredible. This is good news. Safe, effective vaccines are expected to be available to frontline healthcare workers, first responders, long-term care facilities, and others just in the next few weeks. This is good news.

Within the next few months, we would expect that these vaccines would be more broadly available, and hopefully by March, maybe April, pretty much everybody would be able to find a way to get that vaccine, free, for them and for their family. That has to be our goal here, as quickly as possible, to get safe, effective vaccines.

I am concerned—as some of my colleagues know, because I talk about it a lot—that the number of people who say they are willing to get the vaccine is too low. That is one reason I entered one of the trials myself. I am in the Janssen J&J trial. I either got the vaccine or I got a placebo—I don't know—but I did it to be able to go out and talk about it and tell people that these scientists, these experts, the people with the white coats, not the politicians, are the ones calling the shots here on these vaccines and they are being safe and they are being careful.

It is going through a process at the FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, that is actually more stringent than it was pre-COVID. To get this emergency use authorization, they have to go through more testing, and they have to show efficacy rates above 50 percent, which they normally wouldn't. That is good. We want it to be safe.

Even with all that hard work that is being done, all those scientists and researchers working around the clock, there are some Americans who are unwilling and concerned. Part of this is because some politicians, I think, have played politics with this, and I hate that—as if, somehow, in the Trump administration, this wouldn't be trusted. Of course, this is not a political game. This is about saving lives.

I am encouraged by the process that we have seen. I hope people will sign up. When I got into the trial, the Gallup poll that is being done periodically to determine whether people are saying whether they are willing to take it or not was at 50 percent—only 50 percent

of Americans saying they were comfortable getting the vaccine. That number in last couple of weeks has gone up to 58 percent. It is heading in the right direction.

We need people to understand that this is based on science. These vaccines are like the vaccine for smallpox or polio or measles—virtually, wiping out these diseases in this country. My dad had polio as a kid. Now people don't even talk about it. That is because of the vaccine. They work. We have to view it that way.

It is not like the flu vaccine, frankly. The flu vaccine is only effective about one-third of the time. These, what they call efficacy rates, meaning how effective it is, have come in at 90, 95 percent and higher. So we will see what the FDA says here in the next couple of weeks.

I am encouraged that we are likely to get some approvals and likely to begin being able to provide these vaccines for those on the frontlines, for those in long-care facilities, for our first responders, and then out from there to the entire population.

Because these vaccines won't be widely available for 3 or 4 months, we need to act here and act now to provide a bridge to more normal times. That is really how I see it. This is a short-term emergency response to a desperate need we have right now as cases are rising and the economic consequences are being felt in every family in America—more and more pain.

My hope is that Congress will make good on the promise we have seen over the last couple of weeks, where Republicans and Democrats, alike, have come together to say we do have a lot of common ground here; we actually agree on most of this stuff. Who wouldn't be for more money for vaccines and distribution? We need that. Who wouldn't be for more money for small businesses? Who wouldn't be for more money for people who are losing their jobs through no fault of their own? They are struggling to pay the rent and pay their car payment. That is what this legislation can do. I am excited about that possibility.

Meanwhile, in the first week of December, we have lost 13,726 Americans to COVID-19 compared to half that many in the first week of November. In 1 month, we have had a doubling of the number of fatalities. At no point in time during this pandemic have we seen daily mortality rates like this, except in the early days in March and April when New York and New Jersey hospitals were being overrun. We have a real crisis.

Of course, this healthcare crisis is having a direct impact on the economy too. Even with these vaccines on the horizon, it is clear we have to do more to help the economy get through this period of time before we are back to more a normal time.

We have to help, in the short term, to address the impact this healthcare crisis is having on families, on employ-

ment, on businesses, on schools, on nonprofits, and, yes, on State and local governments. As I see it, our job is to provide that bridge so that the economic rebound that we have begun to see can continue.

I am concerned that the recovery we have seen, which has been called a K-shaped recovery—you know, you like to see a recovery come in a V-shape, where you have a recession, you lose jobs and economic growth, and then it comes back up the way it went down. It is called a V-shape. This has been more like a “K.”

For some people, it has been OK. If you are a big-box hardware store or grocery store in America, you are probably doing pretty well right now. If you are a small business, say, a small retail store or sitdown restaurant next to those big boxes, you are not doing OK. You may already be closed down. Your employees may already be unemployed. If not, you are hanging by a thread and hoping and praying that Congress passes legislation to help you.

It has been different for different people. If you have a blue-collar job, you can't telework. If you are in the financial services industry, you are probably doing OK, but if you work in a kitchen making 15 bucks an hour, you are probably not. So it is different for different people in different sectors of our economy. I get that. For some, again, they are doing OK; for others, they are really struggling.

Poverty, overall, is up because of what is happening, and this is sad to me. And we can see it in our communities. Go to your local food bank, see how many cars are lined up, how many people are waiting for 3, 4, 5, in Ohio, sometimes 6 hours just to get food for their families.

Before the pandemic hit, we had very strong economic growth. I think the pro-growth policies that were put in place here in Congress really helped. The tax reform, the tax cuts, the regulatory relief, using our energy—it all was working. We were having a period of growth that was strong, but also it was a very “opportunity” economy. People who had been on the sidelines for years were coming back into our economy. A lot of the benefits were being felt by lower and middle-income workers.

Let me give you an example. In February of this year, just before the pandemic started, we had 19 straight months of wage growth of over 3 percent. That is fantastic. We have been wanting that for a decade and a half in Ohio. We had flat wages, even not keeping up with inflation. Finally, we were seeing wage growth. That 3 percent was compounding and was really helping people feel like if they worked hard and played by the rules, they could get ahead. Sadly, when the coronavirus hit, that ended.

Before the coronavirus, the national poverty rate was the lowest in the history of America. In February, it was 10.5 percent, the lowest rate since we

started tracking this statistic more than 60 years ago. That is the poverty rate. That is incredible. That is what we all want.

After the initial wave of layoffs in the spring, Congress passed the bipartisan CARES Act. That was 9 months ago—9 months ago. It included programs like the stimulus checks and expanded unemployment insurance. It actually helped drive the poverty rate down for a while.

Since then, this continual economic pain felt particularly by low- and middle-income Americans, combined with the lack of action on our part here in Congress to help them, has meant the poverty rate has actually gone back up since May by a significant amount. It now sits at 11.4 percent. That means that 7 million more Americans have fallen into poverty since the spring—7 million.

When you fall into poverty, it is hard to get back out. As long as this economy remains partly shut down—in some of our States, it is largely shut down if you are in the hospitality business or travel business. As long as this happens and we can see more shutdowns in the coming weeks and months, of course, as this crisis continues to worsen, we will see poverty levels rise unless we provide some relief.

Along with the rising poverty rate, what is concerning to me is the fact that more and more people are just giving up hope. There is a stat called the labor force participation rate. It is the share of Americans who are over 16 years old, either working or looking for a job. In February, we hit a 5-year high for labor force participation. That is a good thing. In other words, we had more people participating in the workforce than we had in 5 years.

Unfortunately, it has gone back down. It was up to 63.4 percent. Now it is down to 61.7 percent. The October number works out to a labor force that has nearly 4 million fewer participants than it did in February. Just people participating in the economy has gone down.

Why do we need this package? We have a real problem on our hands. It is a healthcare crisis, but it is also an economic crisis for so many people.

Unfortunately, a record number of women and older Americans are also having to leave the workplace due to either a lack of opportunity or the need to stay home with their kids. For a lot of women, not having childcare is a real problem because the schools are closed. This is driving people out of the workforce as well. This is bad news for businesses trying to reopen, but it is also bad news for our long-term economic health.

People who can't find a way off the sidelines right now won't be able to help power the eventual economic recovery we all hope for, and they will miss out on the economic recovery that does happen. It is a bad position to be in.

We saw with last week's jobs report that hiring is slowing down, meaning that more people may slip out of the labor force. In all, we are still down 10 million jobs in America since February.

Some of my colleagues said to me: My town is doing great or my State is doing great or this industry is doing great. I get that. It is a K-shaped recovery. For some people, it is going well. The fact is that 10 million people—10 million people—that is how many jobs we are down since February.

A further slowdown in the economy is going to be tough for these long-term unemployed. My concern is some may never reenter the workforce without action here to help businesses start hiring again. Some of the hardest hit industries in our States, like the travel, leisure, hospitality industries, are facing real losses.

Our airline industry is expected to cut the equivalent of about 90,000 jobs by the end of this year—90,000 jobs alone in the airline industry. I spoke to the president of American Airlines today. They are big in Ohio. He called. Guess what. He is really eager for us to pass this coronavirus legislation we are talking about. He is really eager because he needs it desperately to hold on to his employees. He doesn't want to furlough any more people, but he doesn't have the business to keep them working.

According to a November survey from the American Hotel and Lodging Association, more than 70 percent of hotels have said that they won't be able to stay in business another 6 months without more assistance—70 percent. Almost 80 percent said they had to lay off more people.

Our restaurant industry lost jobs in November for the first time since April. It is a worrying sign that while restaurants were starting to pick up, things were getting better, in November, because of the news of the high level of cases and the concern people had about going out in public and also, in some States, because of a government edict saying you can't go—in some places, they even said you can't have outdoor dining anymore, not just indoor dining. Think of what this does to those restaurants, most of which are small businesses, family-owned, and were already stressed. Some of those restaurants have closed their doors. I know some of them are never going to reopen again. It is not just restaurants. It is bowling alleys; it is movie theaters; it is the place you get your hair cut. A lot of them are suffering.

A lot of these challenges are going to get worse soon because the number of the programs we put in place in this pandemic to help provide relief for people struggling are going to expire. That is another reason we have to act.

At the end of this year—actually, the day before Christmas—we are going to see some of these programs begin to expire. The pandemic unemployment assistance program that helps the self-

employed, that helps gig economy workers, people who would not normally be eligible for unemployment to be able to step forward and get unemployment insurance, is going to end at the end of this month. That is something a lot of my constituents in Ohio have been depending on if they have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

The pandemic emergency employment compensation program that authorizes another 13 weeks of State benefits, helped by the Federal tax dollar, ends at the end of this month.

Of course, there is a moratorium on evictions that ends at the end of this month.

The bottom line is that the people, State and local governments, the industries, the sectors of our economy that have been hardest hit to date by the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 are going to be the ones who are likely to be hurt most by a continued economic slowdown.

As I said, these are problems that, right now, can only be fixed by all of us stepping forward. Congress needs to take action and take action now. We have about a week. We have about a week.

Fortunately, again, I am pleased to say that the proposal that is in the works on a bipartisan basis here in the Senate is going to help. It has a total price tag of \$908 billion, and you have all heard that, probably, if you have been following what has been going on with this continuing negotiation.

It helps everybody. It helps individuals; it helps families; it helps small businesses; it helps industries; it helps those who have been the hardest hit—with targeted resources. It is focused. It is targeted. It is not the \$3.5 trillion legislation that has been talked about over the last several months. It is targeted. It is focused. Actually, although it is \$908 billion, it is really more like \$350 billion because it takes back money that was spent in the CARES Act, which was appropriated by this Congress but not used, and repurposes it for these purposes. So I think it is a focused, targeted effort that will really help.

Again, what is exciting about it is that, today, there was a proposal made that says we have this bipartisan framework, which is very similar, apparently, and my hope is that the Speaker of the House, the majority leader here in the Senate, the Democratic leader here in the Senate, the Republican leader in the House, and the President of the United States can all figure out how to get together and make this work. This bipartisan proposal that we have been working on here, I think, does provide a good template. By the way, all of those actors I talked about—all of those players—have said good things about the proposal.

It has funding in there to extend the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses. It targets those small

businesses that need the help the most. It is really more targeted this time. It is targeted relief for some of our hardest hit industries, including our airlines and our mass transit industry.

It includes funds to help those Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own—the unemployment insurance extension that I talked about earlier. As a bridge to normalcy, we need this funding. It provides funds for State, local, and Tribal governments based on their revenue shortfalls or their expenses due to COVID—in other words, needs-based.

We are also working on commonsense liability reforms to give businesses, nonprofits, schools, healthcare providers, religious organizations, and others the legal protection they need to reopen with the confidence that they are not going to be subjected to frivolous lawsuits that could put them out of business. That is really important because getting these businesses back up and running is a critical part of getting our economy through these next few months. In my view, these protections are essential.

I am hopeful that both sides can now come together and find common ground on liability protections that we can all support. Several of my colleagues are working on a proposal here, right now, in the U.S. Senate. All of this gives us hope that we will have better days around the corner.

By the way, this proposal is not what any of us would write. It is not the proposal I would write. It is not the proposal our Presiding Officer, who is here in the Chamber, would write. Personally, I would put more emphasis on tax incentives for hiring. We have some good proposals for that. I would put tax incentives in place to get businesses to reopen safely—one called the healthy workplaces tax credit so they could get compensated for putting up the partitions or for having the PPE and providing safer work environments. I would expand the work opportunity tax credit to help those, again, who are on the sidelines in order to bring them back to work through a credit. I would help with regard to the employee retention credit, which was in the CARES Act, that could pick up some of these companies that aren't picked up by the PPP program, companies that have slightly more employees, let's say, so that they don't otherwise qualify.

So there is more I would like to do, but do you know what? This proposal is needed. It is needed so badly that, of course, all of us, regardless of our particular interests or our particular ideas, know it is right, and all of us should get behind it. Let's not make the perfect the enemy of the good—I would even say the enemy of the necessary. Targeted relief now, I think, is the right approach.

Most importantly, all of these significant economic problems I laid out and the healthcare crisis I laid out need to be addressed now. As I said ear-

lier, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for the health side of this crisis, and our proposal that I have been talking about also helps us get there because it has more funding for vaccine development and vaccine distribution. I talked today to some experts in that area who know a lot more about it than I do, and they said it is necessary. We actually have to provide more funding to keep the vaccine train moving so that, by March and April, we will have it widely available. Again, my hope is that Americans will step up and be vaccinated.

By the way, there is also bipartisan legislation that four of us introduced last week—two Republicans, two Democrats—to provide for a public service campaign, not with politicians talking about the importance, as I am doing tonight, but with the experts talking about why the science says that it is a good idea to get vaccinated—again, just like we do for smallpox or polio or the measles.

Will another COVID-19 bill solve every problem we face right now? No, but we could do a lot with this proposal to help the most vulnerable individuals just get by for the next several months rather than slip into poverty, rather than miss out on mortgage payments or miss out on their rent, miss out on their car payments, and other bad outcomes. We can help the most vulnerable businesses keep their lights on and their employees on payroll. Frankly, this is work we should have been doing months ago, but we are here now. Let's get it done.

My hope is that we can end this year by recapturing that spirit of bipartisanship that was on display in March of this year when we passed the CARES package here in the U.S. Senate by a vote of 96 to nothing. That doesn't happen very often. The CARES Act was not a perfect bill either, but we all recognized it was a bill needed for the moment. I hope we can also recognize that another bill is needed now even if it is not perfect. Let's build on the bipartisan proposal we have put forward, and let's ensure that the people we represent get the targeted economic relief they desperately need in the coming months.

Folks, let's not leave for the holidays until we have done that.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO TOM UDALL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, when Senator TOM UDALL announced last year that he would not seek reelection, he said, "The worst thing anyone in public office can do is believe the office belongs to them, rather than to the people they represent." Throughout his more than three decades of service to his State and to our Nation, TOM has demonstrated time and again his adherence to that principle. As New Mexico's attorney general, Congressman, and Senator, he has always treated public office as a public trust.

Everyone who serves in this Chamber takes an oath to support and defend our Constitution. That remarkable document begins with three words TOM lives by, "We the People."

That commitment to our Constitution was put to the test in early 2019 when the President issued an emergency declaration that diverted \$ 3.6 billion from 127 military construction projects that Congress duly approved and funded and the President had signed into law. TOM stood strong against this clear violation of the separation of powers doctrine that is so vital to our enduring Republic, and I was proud to stand with him.

In a powerful floor statement on the resolution we introduced to overturn the emergency declaration, TOM got right to the point. He said:

This is no longer about the president's wall. This is not about party. This is about protecting the very heart of our American system of governance. Congress—and only Congress—holds the power of the purse.

TOM also made clear that this encroachment upon Congress's authority was not an isolated incident but part of a dangerous pattern Congress has permitted over many decades and under many Presidents. And make no mistake—the hyperpartisanship that afflicts Congress far too often aids and abets this lamentable historical trend. By pursuing a bipartisan response to this Executive overreach, TOM helped to make real progress in defending the separation of powers.

It has been a pleasure to work with Tom on many other issues over the years. From land conservation and environmental protection to rural health care and pandemic relief, he has been an informed and effective legislative partner.

TOM leaves the Senate with an impressive record of accomplishments. Even more important, he leaves a legacy of reverence for our Constitution and courage in defending it. I thank him for his service to the people of our Nation and wish him well in the years to come.

REMEMBERING ERNIE BAPTISTA

• Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we recently lost a great Rhode Islander, Ernie Baptista.

Ernie was immensely successful in his professional life; his wise counsel was sought not just around the country but around the globe. Ernie was also a civic-minded community leader at home, with a passion for politics. He immersed himself in Rhode Island's political whirl, where he was well liked and well regarded by people of many different political perspectives. Ernie's keen insight and advice was relied upon by many candidates, including myself and Senator REED. We both treasured Ernie's quick wit, sharp intellect, and great sense of humor. He was bright, insightful, and loyal and always provided wise counsel.

Ernie enjoyed the good things in life: good friends, good meals, and good